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Dear Norma,

For your information

George S.

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August 1, 2001

~~Dear Bill,~~

I was thoroughly delighted to receive your cheery letter today, and thought that I would respond with a bit more relevant information. As well, to ensure the right hand knows what the left foot is up to, this letter is being copied to both Norma and John

First of all, to the points in your letter. I am sorry that I won't have the opportunity of meeting with Margaret - at least not for a little while yet!. I have fond memories of Margaret and I circling around the ball room of the Malvern town hall on Friday nights, trying to escape the attentions of the fearsome woman who supervised the evening "Dances for Young Persons". This woman's philosophy was that idle feet meant trouble, and everybody had to dance all the time. "There will be no socialising". I did hear a long time ago that Margaret's marriage was not a success, and I felt that being a very kind person she certainly did not deserve that.

My brother Dick died in September 1996. A few years prior he had met and married a woman who had significant influence over him to the extent of him becoming a pillar of the Griffith church and amateur dramatic societies. This was reflected by the packed congregation. His funeral was like a Metro Goldwyn Mayer production, and I am sure he enjoyed it immensely. The service was held in the cathedral (churches are only for the plebs). There were 3 officiating gentlemen of the cloth, one being a Bishop and another being an Army chaplain. There was a full choir, about 50 RSL members as guard of honour all wearing medals, a uniformed party of soldiers who were pall bearers and who also fired a rifle salute at the cemetery, a bugler to sound the Last Post and a kilted piper to play a lament. The whole event was professionally video taped.

I have just recently been given Judith Pescott's address and have written to her. It will be a week or so before she responds I guess.

Yes, Vincentia is a lovely place. After 23 years of living in Sydney's increasing pollution - air & traffic - we looked for an alternative. Our home was in the harbourside suburb of Greenwich, which used to be a quiet little cul de sac peninsula with one road only access. Then about 10 years ago the new rich trendies with their merchant bank incomes "discovered" it. The little old charming cottages were demolished to make way for Tuscan monsters, and the atmosphere of village community life just faded into obscurity. So we cashed in

on the obscene real estate prices, and settled here three years ago. I have adjusted to the change and am perfectly happy to stay here until time to hand in my little bucket and spade to that great sand castle builder. Shirley misses all her friends, and of course our married son with his two little boys and married daughter with her two little boys, all of whom are in Sydney. But we have made new friends here. Shirley plays tennis regularly, we both belong to the local Coast Care group, and I am currently honorary treasurer of the Shoalhaven Grape Growers and Winemakers Association. So we have no trouble filling in our time. We have regular telephone communication with our children, almost daily, and we make a Sydney pilgrimage periodically. As well, the little boys like to visit, especially for the beach attractions.

Now to the Pescott function. For us, this commenced in September last year. Shirley and I did a guided tour of the WW1 French battlefields to see where her dad had been in conflict with the villainous Boche across the Somme Valley in 1918. We then went to Ireland to do some family history research into her mother's ancestors, and later to Wales and Cornwall to do a similar thing for her father's ancestors. We also stopped a few days in Newcastle upon Tyne where I have an ex Navy friend. Prior to our arrival in NuT, I had primed my friend Tom to re\search the Pescotts, and he had done a good job by the time we met up with him. In the Northumberland Archives we eyeballed the entry of marriage of Thomas Trewhett Pescott to Mary Anne Dean on 9th April 1852 . We also visited and took photos of the church and altar at Gosforth where the wedding ceremony took place. So, after returning to God's own paradise, I got hold of the Geelong telephone directory, picked 10 Pescott addresses at random, and wrote a letter, very similar to the one you received from me. We received an enthusiastic reply from Gwen Pescott, grand daughter of George William Pescott, sixth born to Thomas and Mary. This was the first I knew of Gwen. Shortly after, we decided that we needed to pay another visit to Tasmania, and en route met up with Gwen and her brother Trevor in Geelong. Trevor writes and publishes nature books - you may have seen some. Gwen told us that there were moves afoot to have a Pescott family gathering, and that we would receive details.

In June we received a letter from Wal Wall, another cousin of ours and grandson of Lillias Jane Pescott, the eighth born to Thomas and Mary. (Our grandfather James Richard was seventh born). It was then we learned that plans for the gathering were well advanced, the event being scheduled for the 150th wedding anniversary of Thomas and Mary. Wal has done an excellent job of pulling the many threads of this planned event together. He is progressively creating what he calls the Pescott Papers, which are a summary of the lives of Thomas, Mary and each of their 10 children. He is yet to tackle James Richard, and is looking to me, Judith who he has contacted, and now you for input.

Wal also has an active committee working on various aspects of the family

gathering. There is his wife Rosemary, cousin Gwen, Wal's brother Errol and his wife Carol, Wal's sister Wynsome Lillias Penn and Wal's sister in law Mardi. So with a capable team like that, the function is bound to be a success.

As you have indicated to me that you, Fay and some of your family may be able to attend this Pescott family gathering, I am presuming to pass on to Wall your address so that you can be kept up to date with the essentials of the committee's plans. You may also like to drop Wal a line to open up communication with him. His address is 375 Langs James Road, Balintore Victroia 3254, phone 5233 1326. If you are fortunate enough to have an 11 year old grandson to teach you how to use the internet (as I have), Wal's email is <wpwall@gsat.edu.au>, and mine is shown above.

A couple of years ago when Shirley and I were in Melbourne for a Naval reunion, we made contact with the young couple who purchased the house at 88 Eskdale Road in 1990, and saved it from the developers who wanted the land for units to be built. They have done a very good job of restoration although they have made a number of alterations and additions. However, these latter have all been accomplished in sympathy with the original design.

Bill, I have rambled on, but I hope you find what I have written to be of interest. I also hope to meet you, your family, John, Norma et al at the Pescott Geelong bun fight next Easter.

Oh yes. A memory. I can recall as a small boy sitting at Aunty Dorothy's dinner table one evening, valiantly struggling through my vegetables, telling lies that I liked boiled potato, with my mind focussed on the anticipated culinary delight that had been promised - Angels Food. I haven't a clue now what the ingredients were, but from memory it was sweet, opaque white, sort of jelly like but not jelly, sort of cake mixture but not, looking something like semolina pudding but not. To be served Aunty Dorothy's Angels Food was the absolute height of luxury.

Cheers,

(Cousin) George Stevens

Copy to: Mrs W.E. (Norma) Oakley, 35 Welfare Parade, Burwood 3125
Mr John Heathcote, Unit 1, 56 Pakington Street, Kew 3101

1/56 Pakington Street,
KEW. 3103.
14/4/02

Dear Shirley and George,

I am writing on behalf of us both to say how much we enjoyed our trip to Geelong last Saturday - was it only a week ago?

The planning and effort put into the event certainly paid off and as far as we were concerned it all went without a hitch.

Amazing that everyone there was related either by blood or by marriage. If we could go back in time the forbears would have been surprised that the increase in relatives over the past 150 years.

We left early as John had managed very well and we thought we should go while we were ahead. He had a bit of jet lag the following day, so we were absent from the photo taking.

Our chances of getting to Vincentia are a bit remote so perhaps you might be able to come down our way. We are hoping to get up to Durras late May. We aren't too sure how possible that is but we may be able to give you a ring if things are working out well.

Please pass on to Wal our congratulations and thanks for such a pleasant day.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Roller & John